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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1791  
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE  
RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE  
RHMFIS/CJTF HOA

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 001334

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, AF/SPG  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON  
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: ASEC PGOV PREL KPKO SOCI AU UNSC SU  
SUBJECT: FUR TRADITIONAL LEADER INCENSED BY KALMA VIOLENCE

REF: A) KHARTOUM 1315  
B) KHARTOUM 1201

¶11. (SBU) On September 1, Charge d'Affaires Fernandez met with the Fur "Maqdoom" of South Darfur Ahmed Adam Rijal, to convey his private condolences to the Fur leader following the killings of at least 33 IDPs at Kalma camp on August 24. Visibly upset, the Maqdoom recounted that this tragedy is part of a long history of violence originating in Khartoum and perpetrated against Darfuris, a history that predates the National Congress Party (NCP) to the time of the Mahdi more than a century ago. The elderly but feisty Rijal criticized the regime's attempts at distancing themselves from the violence at Kalma camp, saying, "They were intending to do that. Their intention is to exterminate the Fur tribe."

¶12. (SBU) Rijal agreed with CDA's assertion that the situation in Nyala is exacerbated by the divisive and weak Wali of South Darfur, Ali Mahmoud, a member of one of Darfur's Arab tribes, the Taisha. Rijal believes the violence at Kalma to be part of a larger plan aimed at displacing IDPs from camps across Darfur, but only the Wali of South Darfur complied with the plan.. "The North Darfur and West Darfur governors did not consent to orders to hit IDP camps in Geneina and El Fasher," Rijal said, and regarding Mahmoud, he added, "He has lost his senses." The other two Darfur Governors are from Darfur's African tribes. Commenting on Mahmoud's failed tenure in Nyala, Rijal connected it with the Government of Sudan's catastrophic inability to pacify and govern the impoverished region: "The government has to acknowledge that Darfuris are the only Sudanese entitled to rule Darfur."

¶13. (SBU) "The government of Sudan is in total collapse," Rijal said. "It is obvious. But who is calling the shots?" Rijal sees the Shagia tribal faction of Vice President Taha, Finance Minister Al Jaz, and Security Minister Salah Gosh as ascendant in Sudanese politics, eclipsing the powerful Ja'alin tribal faction of President al-Bashir and Presidential Assistant Nafie. A university classmate of Hassan al-Turabi, Rijal views the former prime minister and reformed Islamist as vindictive and willing to do anything he can to push out the ruling regime. He sarcastically noted that, despite Turabi's ostracism, the NCP inner elite is still deferential to him. "Taha, who was his student once, still kisses his hand when he sees him at weddings or funerals." In contrast to his harsh words for the NCP, Rijal closed the meeting by thanking the CDA for his August meeting with Presidential Special Envoy Richard Williamson, and calling for continued bipartisan USG attention to the crisis in Darfur. He added that as the US progresses through the 2008 election cycle, "We are happy the two parties have taken an interest in Darfur."

4, (SBU) Comment: Rijal's declining health has had little effect in diminishing his high-level of credibility among Darfuris, and it is telling that he supports two widely circulated theories on the recent events in Darfur: first, that Khartoum ordered the Kalma violence; and second, that the hijacking of the Sun Air flight

several days later was orchestrated to distract international attention from the killings. While the first theory is certainly possible, the second seems a little far-fetched, though nothing would surprise us in Sudan. Partly as a consequence of the GOS's reckless behavior in Nyala last week, Rijal will likely play an increasingly prominent role in determining how the Fur of South Darfur engage the ruling regime. And he is an angry old man who believes that the only way to improve things in Darfur is to hasten the end of NCP rule. End comment.

FERNANDEZ